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ABSTRACT

Among the justifications for using games in foreign language teaching, one finds the theory that games play an important role in the instructional and learning processes and that they can be designed to develop linguistic skills and communicative abilities. A review of several authors not only suggests the value of games and game-like activities to relieve boredom and enhance learning, but also gives indications for a meaningful progression of such activities. A large number of group activities and games are described. Each description includes the game's purpose, the procedure, and some examples. The activities described are appropriate for elementary and intermediate levels; some could be used in more advanced classes. (AMH)

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Game-like Activities and the Teaching of Foreign Languages

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When I first learned that I was to do a presentation on games, I thought, "This should be easy enough. I use games all the time in my classes." However, several concerns quickly came to mind, What are games? Why use them? What about colleagues and administrators who look askance at the suggestion of games in the classroom, especially at the college level? I suppose that they connote a lack of "academic seriousness." In the introduction to his book, Language-teaching Games and Contests, W. R. Lee states, "Now that the very idea of classroom games no longer meets with disapproval, a book about language-teaching games and game-like activities for the classroom seems hardly to need justification. Indeed, that disapproval always did have a dreary and unenterprising air about it and arose in part from lack of observation and knowledge of how pupils learn--as thoroughly on occasion by means of what is called play as by means of what is called 'work'."¹ In spite of Lee's confidence that games in the classroom are widely accepted, my experience has been that they still need justification.

What are games? There is really no clear-cut line of division in language teaching between games and not-games (Lee, pp. 3-4). In fact, almost all activities can be structured to seem game-like. When I looked up the

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definition of games in Webster's dictionary, I found the following, "Any form of play or way of playing; amusement; recreation; sport, frolic," and finally, "a test of skill."² I combined some of these definitions and concluded that games in the teaching of foreign languages are really amusing activities for developing and testing skills. Therefore, games are not unstructured, isolated activities thrown in for mere diversion. They play an important role in language teaching and can be designed to develop various skills, linguistic or communicative. In addition, they are valuable techniques for motivation.

In her essay "Rules, Patterns, and Creativity," Wilga Rivers explains that students must be trained for two levels of foreign language behavior; the first is manipulation, that is, the manipulation of language elements that occur in fixed relationships and don't require intellectual analysis.³ This level includes verb forms or the "nitty gritty" grammar that students must acquire in such a way that it functions for them as does their native grammar, as a vehicle of meaning they do not realize they are using. The second level is "real communication," a level of expression of personal meaning at which possible variations are infinite (Rivers, p. 13). That is, experiences which permit students to "talk off the top of their heads" in Rivers' words. Careful development of each level is needed. "Neglect of the practice needed to acquire such things as interrelated

inflectional systems will force students to make decisions for each element as they proceed, and their use of language will remain hesitant. On the other hand, it is only by going beyond the practice stage and trying out what they know in communication that students can learn to make the higher-level choices that will bring the lower-level adjustments they have learned into operation at the appropriate moment" (Rivers, p. 18).

Intensive practice exercises like drills are needed for the manipulative level. Kalivoda observes that, "Because of their boredom-producing tendencies, drills have represented one of the most difficult areas in which to carry out communication. But they do have a place in the learning process."⁴ Rivers suggests that practice does not have to be boring and meaningless. "It can take the form of games and competitions which call for the production of the types of structures being learned or conversational interchanges within a directional framework" (Rivers, p. 14).

The activities that I am going to describe are game-like activities whose primary function is to develop and test certain linguistic and communicative skills. I think you will see that, with a little imagination, almost any drill or activity can be brought to life by giving it the appearance of a game.

Game-like activities.

"I spy" is a very simple game that can be used in

the first week of language study to review vocabulary or the alphabet and practice pronunciation. One student says, I spy (see) something that begins with a particular letter like B. The class tries to guess what it is, and the student who guesses correctly then proceeds with the game (Lee, p. 48).

"Add-on" is another simple activity to review vocabulary. Students sit in a circle, and one begins with a sentence like, When I went to Peru, I saw some llamas. Each student repeats the sentence and adds an item trying to get them in the right order. For example, When I went to Peru, I saw some llamas and snow-covered mountains. If items are added alphabetically, they are easier to remember. More advanced variations can be devised to practice various tenses. For example, to drill the future tense, students can use sentences like, When I go to Paris, I will see the Eiffel Tower, and be required to add on clauses.

Vocabulary practice as game. "Exercises, oral or written, should always be framed as communication exercises; with a credible sequence of ideas and with some relevance to the class group and the class situation (Rivers, p. 66). The practice of disembodied words and sentences gets the student nowhere. One way to practice vocabulary in a meaningful way is by means of the following sequence. For example, I generally proceed with the study of vocabulary in the following manner: First, the vocabulary is presented with

ample use of visual aids, gestures, etc. Then the same vocabulary is practiced in question form. Begin with questions that elicit yes or no answers and impart the information to be drilled:

Do you know that large is the opposite of small?

Yes, I know that large is the opposite of small.

Is large the opposite of small?

Yes, large is the opposite of small.

Proceed to questions that necessitate supplying one or two words:

What is the opposite of small?

Large is the opposite of small.

The same vocabulary is then practiced in the form of riddles or games. For example, Give a Spanish word that describes an elephant, an ant. In advanced classes, this procedure can be reversed, and the students can make the riddles.

Game-like activities using the imperative. There are several game-like activities using the imperative. "Simon says" is an activity which satisfies the need for drilling mechanical aspects of the language and is also a communicative drill. "Listening to something to which one has to react by drawing something or doing something is communication" (Rivers, p. 66). In this activity, commands are given to the entire class. "Students obey commands which are preceded by 'Simon says' and do not move when the simple command is given. Students who make the wrong movement or

who move at the wrong time are sent to the back of the room, where they continue to participate. The game continues until only one student is left in the front:⁵

Put your hands on your head.

Simon says: "Put your hands on your head."

Or, call on individuals: Marta, Stand up. Carlos, Simon says, "Stand up." Or, you can simply employ the audio motor unit, that is, give the class a series of rapid oral commands, and the students carry them out physically. This is usually amusing to the class and to the teacher as well.

"The teacher always tells us;" "My parents always tell me": There are two ways to do these activities, by means of a pattern practice (selection) or completion activity written on the board or on poster paper:

The teacher always tells us

Sit down
Don't talk
Close your books
Don't use English

?

My parents always tell me

Go to bed early
Eat properly

?

The teacher always tells us

?

My parents always tell me

?

Although this activity seems elementary, students become interested in it. They seem to enjoy mimicing me or their

parents in responses, and I, in turn, am amused by what or how much of what I say to them they remember or by their reactions to parents' comments. These are also good drills for the imperative. The first two represent linguistic simplicity because all the elements needed to express several ideas are provided in their correct forms. In his article, "Molecule by Molecule: Building Hope for Man," Jarvis states that, "The open-ended ? provides options for 'real communication.' It functions as an invitation to say anything the student can say and wants to say--an invitation that can be declined if he is more comfortable with the security of the given options."⁶

"What have I done?" is an activity to drill the present perfect tense. I usually base questions using this tense on famous people, current events or campus personalities. Such activities that emphasize content that is familiar to students, that interests them, or relates to their experiences, motivates them to communicate. A favorite question to elicit a variety of responses is, What has the president done? Often the content of a drill will determine if it is meaningful and/or game-like.

"Which bothers me" is a game-like activity used to drill the neuter lo plus the relative pronoun cual in Spanish in a relatively relevant way. This is a completion activity. The teacher puts an example on the board like: Students don't study, which bothers me. He/she then erases the underlined

part of the sentence and asks students to complete the sentence. Students become amused and interested when they add such phrases as; the weather in Ohio is terrible; the dorm serves horrible food, etc. Although activities like this one seem somewhat forced, they are related to a functional use of the language. This is a rudimentary communication exercise in which students are permitted to express reactions within linguistically-controlled situations. This type of situation and others like establishing social relations, seeking and giving information, learning to do something, hiding one's intentions, encouraging, entertaining others or displaying achievements, where the student is on his own, trying to use the language for the normal purposes of language can be worked out at an early stage (Rivers, p. 27).

"Who am I?": "Many drills can be given the appearance of a game, or of elementary communication, by provoking the students into asking the teacher a series of questions in response to cues" (Rivers, p. 24). One way to do this is with the activity "Who am I?". Prepare the students by saying, Do you think your teacher is only a teacher? Well, appearances are deceiving. Today I've taken the identity of a famous person. Who am I?⁷ Students try to guess by asking questions. This works well during the first few weeks of language study to establish a relaxed and jovial atmosphere appropriate to communication. In his activities

manual, Intercambios, Freeman suggests dividing the class into groups of four to six students. Then, give each an envelope containing names of famous persons. One chooses a name, and the rest guess. Then the envelope is passed to another student (Freeman, p. 2).

"Round robin" or "Circular narrative" is used primarily to reinforce usage of particular tenses. I use it with past tenses, that is, to practice use of the imperfect and preterite tenses. However, this activity may be used with other tenses as well like the future. The teacher begins a narrative, and the students are instructed that they are to add one complete sentence to the narrative. The only constraint is that each pay particular attention to choosing the correct tense, imperfect or preterite. The narration is then developed until each member of the class has contributed a sentence. This activity sometimes reaches very humorous proportions.

"Who invented?" is used to drill the passive voice and is another example of the importance of content in making an activity seem game-like. After years of drilling, Who closed the door? The door was closed by John, I decided to base my drills on common knowledge that I thought the students might have. Thus, I prepared many questions on inventors, explorers, historic events and the like, and students were instructed to answer using the passive voice:

Who invented the radio?

The radio was invented by Marconi.

Who discovered the Pacific Ocean?

The Pacific Ocean was discovered by Balboa.

Such tests of common knowledge, accompanied by melodramatic gestures on my part when students seemed not to know the answers to simple questions, soon became an amusing yet effective technique to practice the passive voice. Since then, I have tried to base other activities on what might constitute the "American" students' basic education.

Thus, almost any activity, with a little imagination can be made game-like. Music and games offer a pleasant change of pace in the lesson, and they motivate because they are interesting. However, as I mentioned previously, they should be selected primarily for their educational value. They are not mere distractions or moments of relaxation but rather selected activities which contribute to furthering the linguistic or communicative aims of the lesson (Allen, p. 31). "Such experiences are not intended to replace the careful teaching of the language we already supply . . . but to expand it" (Rivers, p. 27).

Reproducing television shows: "What's My Line?" "Twenty Questions," and "Mystery Guest."

Three basic quiz shows which students may enact with facility are: "Twenty Questions," "What's My Line?" and "Mystery Guest." These may be used within the first term of language study. They require only a basic vocabulary and may be used to review or drill the present tense of

particular verbs like ser, estar and tener since most questions are prefaced by, Do you live? are you? do you work? and other basic constructions.

The teacher chooses a panel of approximately six students and one or two guests. The teacher then hands each guest a slip of paper on which is written the profession for "What's my Line," the answer (a vocabulary word that has recently been taught) for "Twenty Questions," or the name of the mystery guest depending upon which television show is being presented. The paper is shown to the class-audience but not to the panel. The teacher then instructs the panel to ask only a determined number of questions that may be answered by yes or no. The role of the teacher is to offer assistance when needed with phrasing questions or determining answers.

Students should be prepared for "What's my Line" by having them make a list of professions on the board. New vocabulary can be introduced and old vocabulary reviewed. This is followed by elementary selection or completion exercises:

I want	to be	a bum a teacher a lawyer a politician ?
I want	to be	?
I want	to be	? because ?

The first selection activity is very simple. Practice in selection should and can be included in classwork from the very first lessons. The second and third are more complex. They involve choosing the correct indefinite article and/or giving information about oneself. A variation of this activity by Hendrickson suggests that one student pretend that he or she is employed in a particular profession. The class tries to guess the name of the profession by listening to the student's oral clues.⁸ This is a more advanced activity.

The advantages of these quiz shows are that they serve as a pleasant review of basic verbs and nouns, and they give beginning students a sense of using the language in a relevant and interesting manner. Advanced students may present talk shows, an activity which involves seeking information as well as role-playing. The teacher can give students turns playing both the role of host or guest to be interviewed.

"Tic Tac Dough." There are a variety of useful box games that one can purchase, and I'm sure that you've used such games as "Bingo." "Tic Tac Dough," a popular TV game show is interesting to use at the advanced level, during the third term or higher. There are two contestants who choose questions from particular categories. The game includes about forty different categories. The instructor can either make up questions, translate the questions provided beforehand so that a student Master of Ceremonies can read them, or the teacher can act as Master of Ceremonies and translate

them spontaneously. In this case, another student can interview the contestants. Winners receive prizes like pieces of candy. This is a communicative situation where, as contestant or Master of Ceremonies, the student is "on his own" and "should be allowed to use anything he knows of the language and any aids (gestures, drawings, etc.) In this way, he will learn to draw on everything he knows at a particular moment in his acquisition of the language and fight to put his meaning over" (Rivers, p. 27). At this point, I would like to interject a comment by Rivers, with whom I am in agreement, on making corrections, "It is during production practice that immediate corrections should be made. In interaction practice we are trying to develop an attitude of innovation and experimentation with the new language" (Rivers, pp. 32-3).

"Password" is another effective quiz show. Hendrickson describes the procedure as follows, "Divide the class into two equally-numbered teams (if there is an "extra" person, he or she can keep score at the chalkboard, otherwise the teacher can do so). One member of each team tries to help a team partner to say a vocabulary word by providing one-word clues. The team that has the highest number of correctly-guessed words wins the game. This is an excellent way to review vocabulary" (No. 34).

"Word/phrase Slips": This game is similar to "Password." "The teacher gives each student a slip of paper with a vocabulary word or idiomatic expression on it that the

students studied recently. Students should not show their slips of paper to one another. Students take turns, giving the class verbal hints that describe their word or phrase. This is an excellent way to review vocabulary items in a communicative manner (Hendrickson, No. 37).

Demonstrations.

Demonstrations provide good opportunities for real communication. "One student shares a skill or talent with other students who participate in it by listening, doing or asking questions. . . . For example, students may bring slides, post cards, home travel movies, games, unusual toys, art objects, etc." (Hendrickson, No. 33).

"Show and Tell" is a demonstration activity. Instruct the students to bring something that has a special meaning for them to class the next day. Divide into groups or class. Say that someone will begin the discussion by describing the object. Later, change groups. Freeman says that this can lead into a situation where real communication is possible or be used to drill certain structures: If you had a lot of money, what would you buy? How important are material possessions? Or, a cultural discussion might be based on this. For example, Do you think that Americans are more materialistic than other people? (Freeman, p. 40).

Situations, skits and role-playing.

Role-playing activities are within the reach of the

beginning and intermediate class. The role may come from a reading selection, a dialog, or from some situation that the teacher or student presents. I begin using role-playing in the first few weeks of language study and take roles or situations from the lessons. For example, I may ask students to prepare conversations based on the following situations: In a museum, travelling on a plane to Madrid, tourists in Mexico City, in a Spanish class, or captured by some indians in the jungles of Brazil. Basing conversation on the text lends structure, and students have most of the necessary vocabulary. Students are given one to three minutes to prepare a conversation. While they are preparing skits, the teacher circulates among groups and serves as a resource. Presentations can be done in several ways. In beginning classes, the teacher can divide the class into groups of three or four and have them carry out role-playing activities in a corner of the room. These are the least secure students and shouldn't be put on the spot. For intermediate or advanced classes, I have "theater in the round." The class sits in a circle, and I divide them into groups of three or four. Performances are given in the center of the circle. Later, two or more students may come before the class to act out an impromptu conversation.

This kind of activity is good because it provides a variety of learning experiences and gives the sense of using the language in a meaningful way. Indeed, students

learn in a variety of ways; they learn through activity, role-playing, seeing, hearing, touching and manipulating (Rivers, p. 67). Language teachers need to search for means of securing variety and can ill afford to neglect whatever teaching possibilities games offer (Lee, p. 1). The teacher must also work out situations from an early stage where the student is on his own, trying to use the language for the normal purposes of language. In his article, "Skill-Using Activities in the Foreign Language Classroom," Sidney Zelson offers several situations for "real communication" which can be used as a basis for creating your own. For example, "You are Columbus. The crew wants to go back to Spain, and perhaps to execute you. Talk them out of both. Be eloquent. You would like to borrow money from a bank but the bank officer is reluctant to lend it to you. Try to talk him into making the loan."⁹

Directed role-play for culture: Hendrickson describes a role-playing activity for culture: "Divide the class into groups and give each conversation partner a card explaining a role-play situation that represents a conflict between the students' native and target culture. The students act out their assigned roles in the foreign language"(No. 12).

Writing and presenting television shows: Second or third-level students may produce their own television shows. Produce in this sense means to write and dramatize a script. At the lower level, this activity is generally

related to the text, and topics may be chosen which will reinforce vocabulary as well as provide an opportunity for real communication.

Students are divided into groups of three or four and given a topic plus some appropriate vocabulary. They are instructed, in the target language, to use the vocabulary to prepare and present a mini-television program of approximately two to three minutes in length. This activity may be linguistically controlled by choosing topics and vocabulary from lessons already covered in the text, or the teacher can permit advanced students greater use of their imagination in choosing topics. Some topics that I have used are: a melodrama, an educational program, the weather report, the sports' report, the news, and a cooking show. The role of the teacher is simply to move from group to group during the preparation of scripts, to listen and correct.

The value of this activity is that it permits each student to become involved, and topics such as those suggested provide opportunities for using one's imagination, expressing opinions, and displaying one's achievements. My experience has been that students particularly enjoy entertaining in this way because it gives them a sense of being able to use the language in a real way. They also gain a sense of pride from displaying communicative competence to students as well as teacher, and the achievements of one student may serve as motivation to others.

In "Talking off the top of Their Heads," Wilga Rivers'

excellent article on developing "real communication," she stresses that students should always be given the opportunity to use natural talents in opportunities like role-playing, TV shows, commercials, etc. "Students should be encouraged, at the advanced level, to try out new combinations of elements to create novel utterances. This is what the advanced student would do were he to find himself in a foreign country" (Rivers, p. 27).

A variation of the role-playing activity is described by Hendrickson, "Give each small group a paper bag containing five to six different objects. Students have twenty minutes to create a skit using the objects in the paper bag (including the bag!). Each group presents its skit before the class (Hendrickson, No. 17).

"Famous person" is an activity which involves role-playing and is appropriate for any level. It may be based on the text or simply provide an opportunity for conversation in advanced classes. The first time that the activity is presented, the teacher sets the scene and lends an air of mystery to the classroom by announcing in the target language, "Today we are very pleased to have a distinguished guest with us. This person has consented to visit the class and answer any questions that you might have." At this point, the teacher stands beside and points to a pre-determined student introducing him or her as the guest. To achieve success in this activity the first few times it is

used, the teacher should choose a student who likes to entertain, is not shy, and who has an adequate command of the language. After students become accustomed to the activity, all can be given a turn.

After the guest has been introduced, the instructor should initiate the questions and then ask for questions from the class. Choice of the guest may be determined by the objectives of the teacher. For example, if he or she wishes to review content or cultural material, he/she may choose a literary or historical figure. We have had such famous guests as Cervantes, El Greco and Christopher Columbus. If the objective is to permit students to voice opinions or the like, political figures or controversial personalities may be chosen.

Problem solving.

Problem solving is text-related. The objective is to have the student complete a sentence with an unpredicted yet linguistically-controlled response. For example, if the teacher wishes to practice contrary-to-fact clauses, he or she may have the student complete the following sentences: If I were rich..., If I were president..., If there were no class tomorrow..., or, If I were alone on an island. The student must complete the sentence with a particular construction, yet he or she still has the option to express opinions or needs, that is, to say something that is "for real."

"What would you do?" is a problem-solving activity.

Divide the class into two or more groups. The first group writes contrary-to-fact if-clauses. The other group writes the result clauses. After 15-20 clauses, combine them. That is, a student from the first group reads one if-clause; a student from the second group completes it (Freeman, pp. 166-67). The results can be very amusing:

If I got up earlier	I would take a long trip
If I were invisible	I would learn more Spanish
If I were smarter	?
?	

Or, put all the clauses into two separate hats. Send several students to the board and ask them to take one of the pieces of paper from each hat. Then they proceed to copy the two clauses on the board and make a sentence (Allen, p. 101).

Competitive games.

Drills are necessary to develop communication yet they may be presented in a stimulating manner. Rivers underscores this when she says, "The student cannot realize the understanding of the whole before he has experienced, through practice and active use, the functioning of these parts. . . . The student cannot put higher-level choices into operation with ease if he has not developed facility in the production of the interdependent lower-level elements. . . . Too often in the past, foreign language teaching concentrated on an understanding of the language system as a whole without providing sufficient practice in rapid production of lower-level

elements" (pp. 15-17). One way to foster rapid production of lower-level elements like verbs and minimize the tediousness of such practice is through competition. The American student has been raised in an atmosphere of competition, and anyone who has ever competed in sports knows the excitement of being part of a team and the feeling of satisfaction when he/she does well and receives some sort of reward. I have tried to capitalize on these principles in order to drill what are sometimes the necessary but tedious aspects of a language. Competition facilitates this learning process; there is motivation and an immediate sense of purpose different from that which results from meaningful communication. Here, the reward is in the form of praise from teammates or congratulations for winning a point.

To drill numbers, times or verb forms by means of competition, divide the class into two or more teams. One student from each team goes to the board. If numbers or times are being drilled, the teacher says either in the foreign language (cincuenta y seis; son las doce) and the student must write the numerical figure (56; 12:00). The first to write the correct answer scores a point. Lee describes a variation of this in the following manner: "The teacher has written numbers all over the board. . . . The teacher calls out a number and the first to put a ring around it scores a point" (p. 36). To drill verbs, the teacher says a subject, infinitive and the tense required (yo-tener-preterite). The student who writes the correct answer first

wins a point for his/her team. If no answer or an incorrect answer is written, ask the class to supply the correct one. Competition is valuable for the reasons I mentioned previously and also because it gives a kind of immediate feedback; the student is given immediate confirmation of the correctness of his response and immediate reward. Continual feedback provides reinforcement which is part of motivation (Rivers, p. 62). Students are very enthusiastic about these activities, and even some of the laziest will put forth extra effort to prepare if it is announced that there will be competition tomorrow.

Relay race: The relay race may be used after a new tense has been introduced. The teacher first divides the class into two or three teams. He or she then writes a subject pronoun or proper name, one for each student on a team, across the entire width of the blackboard. There should be plenty of writing space for students standing side by side. At a given signal each writes a complete sentence in the designated tense starting with the pronoun above. As each individual finishes his/her sentence, he/she moves to the next pronoun, provided that the student to the right is finished, and writes a sentence using it. Students may not duplicate sentences already written. All students keep rotating. The student at the far right of the board takes the place of the student at the far left. After two or three minutes the teacher says "stop" and all sit down. Then the teacher with the help of the class counts the correct

sentences and points out particular grammatical errors. The team with the highest number of correct sentences wins (Allen, p. 98).

A variation of the relay race is the sentence relay. "At the teacher's signal the first player in each team runs to the blackboard and writes a word, then back to his team and hands the piece of chalk to the second player, who does likewise, passing on the chalk to a third. The aim is to write a complete sentence, but the sentence must not come to an end until all the members of the team have written one word each. If a word is misspelt or illegible, the teacher rubs it out immediately (Lee, p. 137).

The "vocabulary bee" is a good way to reinforce and review vocabulary. I usually use it after each two or three lessons. The teacher may divide the class into teams or have individual competition. A student may win a point by successfully doing one of the following: give the Spanish equivalent of an English word, give a Spanish word that fits a particular definition or give the English equivalent of a Spanish word.

"Culture bee": As you know many of the new texts include brief paragraphs on cultural aspects at the end of each lesson. Wondering how to spice up, test and insure knowledge of these, I decided to have a "culture bee" at the end of the term for additional credit. I made up a list of definitions using most of the cultural information in the

text. For example, he painted "Vista de Toledo," or a Spanish drink made with wine and fruit. Students were asked to stand in a single line across the front of the classroom. Definitions in the target language were read and students were asked to supply a Spanish word to fit the definition. Those who answered incorrectly were asked to sit down. The remaining three students who were standing received extra credit. This provided a good summing up of information as well as a review at the end of the term. And, students were so enthusiastic that they wanted to repeat it several times.

If you are going to use competitive activities, it is a good idea to schedule them toward the end of the class period as students tend to get noisy. Also, I found out that it is a good idea to keep the same teams throughout the term and award extra credit to a team. That way you can capitalize on peer pressure to prod the members of their team to study harder throughout the term.

Interviews.

Other game-like activities for developing linguistic and communicative skills are based on interviews. One of these, conversation cards, has been described by Bonin and Birchbickler in "Real Communication Through Interview and Conversation Cards."

The procedure for this activity is to prepare a series of cards containing questions that students are to use to

gain information from each other. These cards are generally related to the text and used in connection with a particular grammar point.¹⁰ For example, I have used them to drill constructions using hace. . .que and desde. . .hace. Some questions that I have included on each card are, How long have you been studying Spanish? How long have you known me? How long have you been attending OWU? The cards may contain the same or different questions, and students can exchange them as they finish. The students are divided into groups of three; one asks, one answers, and one gives help and/or records answers. Then the roles are changed until each student has performed each function. The role of the teacher is to listen, evaluate, and make corrections.

The value of this activity is that it makes each student an active participant and maximizes the amount of time each student spends speaking and listening. Also, it provides an opportunity for interaction and mutual help. At times, the latter can be more effective than help from a teacher.

Another interview activity is "Knowing the Real You." Hendrickson describes the procedure as follows: Tell the students to "list at least five questions that an interviewer should ask you in order to know the real you. Exchange your list of questions with a conversation partner. As you interview your partner, write down the answers to his or her questions. Then introduce your partner to the class using the information you obtained from the interview. Each

partner may correct or expand this information as desired.
Describing or explaining pictures.

This activity is based on the use of visual aids. The teacher may show several pictures to the class and ask students to describe them. For example, What do you see in this picture? or, What is in this picture? Description of pictures can be used successfully at the most elementary level and is generally coordinated with the text. For example, if particular vocabulary or grammar constructions like agreement of adjectives or comparisons are to be emphasized, the teacher may select pictures that will probably elicit responses using these particular elements. For example, a beginning language student who sees a landscape picture with mountains will probably note that las montañas son altas, "the mountains are high." This activity may also lead into "real communication" for the instructor may then follow with questions like, Do you live in the city or the country? Do you prefer the city or the country? Why? National Geographic is an excellent source of unusual pictures that can be used in this activity. A more advanced version is "explaining pictures." This is used principally for eliciting communication or drilling grammar. You may post several pictures in the classroom and number them. Ask students to consider them for a moment and then choose one to describe, explain or to use as the basis for an imaginary story. You will have no trouble getting

students to communicate. An important advantage of this activity is that it allows for differences in skill. Students less sure of themselves can fall back on describing. More advanced ones can be imaginative or creative.

Picture explanation can also be used as a drill. For example, I have used an activity which I call "Why is she sad?" to drill the use of the infinitive in place of the subjunctive. The students are shown a picture of a sad girl and instructed to give an explanation by constructing a sentence with information supplied by the teacher and supplemented by their own choice of subject and verb object:

?	(didn't)	let	her	to leave
		order (ed)		to drop out
		permit (ted)		of school
		?		?

In this manner, the linguistic element being taught is made clear, yet by associating sentences and picture, the student gains a sense of using the language in a meaningful way.

Miscellaneous.

Hendrickson describes an amusing activity called "Strip Story." He explains, "Select a story or anecdote with the same number of lines as the number of students in each small group. Type each line of the story, then ditto several copies; one copy is cut into strips with one sentence on each strip. Randomly distribute one strip per student. Allow a maximum of one minute for students to memorize their

strip (they must not write anything down or compare their strips at this time). After the strips are memorized, collect them. Instruct the students that they must now reconstruct the sequence of the story or anecdote without writing down anything. The teacher sits down and remains silent. When the group agrees on a story sequence, the teacher asks the students to repeat the story in sequence, each person saying his or her part. (At this point, the teacher can ask the students to dictate their sentences to their group or the teacher can do so). Finally, the teacher passes out copies of the original story or anecdote so that the students can compare their oral or written versions of it (No. 19).

The procedure for "Using Your Ingenuity" is as follows: Show various objects or pictures of objects to the class or groups. Tell them to think about how many imaginative ways the objects could be used. The individual or group that has the highest number of innovative or unusual uses for each object wins.¹¹

"I'm sure that as you were sitting here you may have said to yourself as I have done so many times, 'I already knew all she covered and what she emphasized.' Most sincere teachers faced with the same problem will work out similar solutions, varying only in detail."¹² Progress in improvement of the conditions for learning comes not through funded projects here and there but through . . . the ideas and

experiments that go on in yours and other classrooms in operation every hour of the week,"and through the corroboration, among us teachers, of what each has already sensed or experienced (Rivers, p. 70).

NOTES

- ¹ W. R. Lee, Language-teaching Games and Contests (Glasgow: Oxford University Press, 1965); p. 1.
- ² Webster's New World Dictionary (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1957), p. 595.
- ³ Wilga M. Rivers, "Rules, Patterns, and Creativity," in Speaking in Many Tongues: Essays in Foreign Language Teaching (Rowley: Newbury House, 1972), pp. 13-15.
- ⁴ Theodore B. Kalivoda, "Communication in the Foreign Language Classroom," Hispania, 59 (May 1976), 294.
- ⁵ Edward David Allen and Rebecca M. Valette, Modern Language Classroom Techniques (New York: Harcourt, 1972), p. 142.
- ⁶ Gilbert A. Jarvis, "Molecule by Molecule: Building Hope for Man," The Modern Language Journal, 59 (September-October, 1975), p. 223.
- ⁷ G. Ronald Freeman, Intercambios (New York: Random House, 1980), pp. 1-2.
- ⁸ James M. Hendrickson, "Getting Students to Communicate: Tips and Techniques," TS, No. 36.
- ⁹ Sidney N. Zelson, "Skill-Using Activities in the Foreign Language Classroom." American Foreign Language Teacher, 4 (1974), 33-35.
- ¹⁰ Thérèse M. Bonin and Diane W. Birckbichler, "Real Communication Through Interview and Conversation Cards," Modern Language Journal, 59 (January-February, 1975), 22-23.

¹¹ Patricia Boylan, et. al., *Reflejos* (New York: Holt, 1979), p. 93.

¹² Chris N. Nacci, "Spoken and Written Composition: Objectives and Techniques, Bases and Evaluations," Hispania, 56 (March 1973), 106.